

Interviews conducted on July 20, 2005 in Tulchin by Valerii Dymshits, Anna Mikhailova

RG Number:
RG-50.632*0009

Interview Summary:

Isaak Il'ich Mankovetskii, born in 1933 in village of Merventsy in Podolsk region; has lived in Tulchin since 1958. He can speak Yiddish. He is a teacher by profession. He had taught English, German, and Latin. His father worked at a mill. Theirs was the only Jewish family in the village of Merventsy four kilometers from Yaruga. There are no Jews left in Yaruga.

Before the war he spoke Yiddish at home. Klezmer bands played at Jewish weddings. His niece was matched in marriage by a paid matchmaker (shotkhente in Yiddish) in Soroki. She and her husband now live in Israel.

Nina Viktorovna Mankovetskaia, born in 1930 in Gaisin. She was a teacher in a technical school. Many Jews lived in Gaisin. Several streets where Jews lived became a ghetto during the war. Her family lived in the center of town among Jews and Ukrainians. She is Ukrainian (not Jewish). Jews and Ukrainians were on friendly terms. There was a Jewish school. Jews made good fish and cutlets, strudel.

Nikolai Dmitrievich Smal', born in 1946 in Tulchin. He is a driver by profession. He served for three years in Vladivostok. His mother was born in Odessa. She was evacuated to Ural region and worked the entire war years as master in Chelyabinsk tractor factory. There she met his father and moved to Tulchin where she has lived ever since. Before 1950s a large part of Tulchin population was Jewish. Jews lived mostly in eastern part of the city. Central street was almost all Jewish. Jews strolled and socialized on the streets together. Many were in trade. His mother worked in a store. There was a synagogue. He knows some Yiddish.

Many Jews have left for Israel. Now there are only about 200 Jewish families in Tulchin.

Jewish weddings always had violin music. There were many mixed marriages. Mixed marriage couples were buried at common cemetery.

Mikhail Hershkovich Shvartsman, born in 1930 in Tulchin; his parents and grandparents are also from Tulchin. He had worked at a factory. He speaks very little Yiddish. His father was a "Stelmach" (he made and repaired wheels and wheel vehicles, as carts, wagons, etc.). He had his own state workshop at a kolkhoz Mazolovka. His father died at the front. His mother was a homemaker. He had a brother and a sister. He was at Pechora. His mother was killed by the Germans in 1943. He began working at age 14. Before the war there were 15,000 Jews in Tulchin. About 10,000 died at Pechora camp. Now there are around 250 left – mostly from mixed marriages. There was a large synagogue on "shilgos" (synagogue street) before the war. The synagogue was destroyed after the war. In its place was built the metal factory. There had been another synagogue but it was replaced by a technical school. People prayed in groups at home in secret, as it was forbidden. There was an apartment at Lukhovitsy where they gathered to pray. There was a minyan of old people. Young people did not pray. Most of the Jews have left.

Feiga Naumovna Shvartsman, born in 1938 in Tulchin. They have been married for fifty years. All her relatives are also from Tulchin. She had worked at powder coating metal factory. She speaks very little Yiddish. Her father returned from the war an invalid and died young. Her mother was a homemaker with four children. Her older sister died at Pechora. She herself was at Pechora. She was six years old when they left Pechora.

She has two daughters. One lives in Tulchin and the other in Israel. One daughter understands Yiddish. She is a teacher. They have three grandchildren and one great-grand daughter. There was Kaptsonivka district in Tulchin which extended to the Jewish cemetery. This is where the poor lived. The central street was called Lenin street; that part of the city was more prestigious. People dressed up and strolled on its streets, mostly on Sundays. There was a park with a fountain. Matchmaker ("shothhente") would make a match ("knosemul") for a fee. Bride and groom were seated side by side and a plate was broken usually by the fathers to mark the engagement. After engagement she went to work at a candy factory. She later broke the engagement. There were people who cooked and made biscuits ("lekah") for weddings.

Language:

Russian

Yiddish

Geographic Name:

Tulchin (Ukraine)

Gaisin (Gaysin) (Vinnitsa district)

Village of Merventsy

Yaruga (Vinnitsa district)

Soroki

Pechora camp

Kapsonivka